

## **Draft Declaration by the Members of Parliament**

*Tenth Round Table of Members of Parliament  
Windhoek, 20 and 21 September 2013  
in parallel with the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the  
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*

### **The role of Members of Parliament in the efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and drought: Parliamentary contributions to achieving a land-degradation neutral world in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

*We, members of parliament*, meeting – on the issues of the UNCCD implementation process and of a land-degradation neutral world in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda – in Windhoek (Republic of Namibia) on 20 and 21 September 2013 on the occasion of the tenth Round Table at the invitation of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Parliament of the Republic of Namibia, with the support of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, alongside the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11):

*Are alarmed* by the increased frequency of droughts, as currently experienced in Namibia, and continuous trends of desertification and land degradation;

*Reaffirm* that the most important instrument for dealing with desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) is the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification including its 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy);

*Acknowledge* that, despite progress made in the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, so far achievements have been uneven and fewer than expected;

*Reiterate* our commitment to the 1992 Rio Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the 2010 Millennium Declaration, with particular reference to sustainable development, poverty eradication, peace and security, human rights and democracy;

*Recall* that the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “The Future We Want”, acknowledged that DLDD represent common challenges that continue to pose serious threats to the sustainable development of all countries;

*Are convinced* that global, national, regional, subregional and local efforts to halt and reverse land degradation are prerequisites for freeing hundreds of millions of people from poverty by addressing food, sanitation, water and energy security, adapting and mitigating climate change, building resilience to drought, as well as achieving the MDGs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

*Recognize* that Rio+20 gave birth to the new paradigm of a land-degradation neutral world (LDNW), which constitutes one of the most important SDGs and presents an unprecedented opportunity to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda and to renew parliamentary efforts in this context;

**Emphasize** in accordance with the outcome document of Rio+20 that democracy, good governance and the rule of law at all levels, are essential for sustainable development;

**Are committed** to mobilize stronger parliamentary support in the implementation of the Convention by undertaking the following six main roles of legislators (“the parliamentary hexagon”): (a) making laws, (b) allocating budgets, (c) overseeing and controlling the actions of governments, (d) fostering public discourse and raising awareness, (e) electing competent personalities and bodies, and (f) influencing foreign policy and international cooperation.

***We declare that Parliamentarians and Parliaments should:***

1. Enact an enabling legislation and identify standards, aligning them with the provisions of the UNCCD and its 10-year Strategy, as well as with the ‘land-degradation neutrality’ goal, through a clear roadmap.
2. Promote the mainstreaming of DLDD issues into the domestic and the development cooperation agenda.
3. Work towards improving the quality of development cooperation and increasing the volume of Official Development Assistance, particularly in those developed countries that have not yet reached the 0.7 per cent target –to be achieved as fast as possible, by 2018 at the latest (in order to contribute to enhancing the implementation of the UNCCD 10-year Strategy).
4. Give higher priority to land degradation issues and water scarcity problems to overcome the marginalization of dryland communities, increase investment in rural areas – also in order to create new income opportunities, and put an end to the calamitous agricultural protection arrangements and subsidized agricultural exports.
5. Provide substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to support initiatives to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, taking into account, and advancing, the natural capital approach.
6. Further support targeted capacity-building including parliaments and parliamentarians, training programmes and women’s empowerment.
7. Promote scientific and technology research findings on DLDD – for instance in the fields of desalinisation and renewable energies -, harness traditional knowledge as well as capitalize on the benefits from modern information and communication technologies, and use the results of these scientific activities in policies and decision-making to benefit the public, private and civil society organization sectors in their efforts to address DLDD.
8. Monitor executive actions and enquire whether anti-desertification measures are included in overall government agendas (by means of oral and written questions to the executive, motions, establishment of special commissions or ad hoc committees, hearings, and field visits).
9. Ask for stronger involvement when it comes to the elaboration and execution\_of multilateral environment agreements (MEAs), poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), country strategy papers (CSPs) and national action plans/programmes, supported by bilateral and multilateral development agencies and organizations.

10. Promote and support relevant annual events, such as special parliamentary debates and the World Day to Combat Desertification on June 17 with appropriate activities in constituencies, issuing commemorative postal stamps, establishing awards for good DLDD activities, engaging in environmental education, as well as involving schools, academics, artists and the mass media.
11. In order to achieve a land-degradation neutral world (LDNW) by 2030 at the latest, promote partnership building between policymakers and decision-makers, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, youth and women's associations and the academic community.
12. Ensure that political parties include the implementation of the Convention and the LDNW goal in their manifestos and other policy documents as a matter of priority.
13. Elect committed personalities to parliamentary leadership, relevant committees and rapporteur roles.
14. Establish a national network of Members of Parliament and a parliamentary focal point on issues relating to the UNCCD, if not already in place.
15. Pursue an integrative approach dealing with the three Rio Conventions.
16. Contribute towards making the UNCCD the global leading authority on land and soil and DLDD, help establish an Intergovernmental Panel/Platform on Land and Soil and promote an agreement of a new legal instrument, e.g. a Protocol on LDNW, to provide the UNCCD with a global monitoring framework to focus efforts and empower the international community to act with the speed and scale required to address this issue.
17. Help ensure that the post-2015 process, particularly the SDGs and land degradation neutrality, serve as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable human development in the United Nations system as a whole and support the mobilization of resources to facilitate the implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.
18. Strengthen and capitalize regional/continental parliaments in DLDD issues.
19. Create parliamentary oversight mechanisms, e.g. vis-à-vis the Global Environment Facility, regional development banks, the Green Climate Fund.
20. Promote the establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly.

***We, the Parliamentarians, emphasize that:***

21. The UNCCD deserves more success, for the sake of the people living under the stress caused by desertification, and a greater visibility – by making desertification and land degradation a cornerstone in the general architecture of global environmental governance.
22. The Parliamentary Network on the UNCCD must be better utilized; its Steering Committee is invited to consider options for a better follow-up of the declarations of the Round Tables and for an ~~more~~ efficient use of the UNCCD handbook for parliamentary action.
23. The UNCCD secretariat should continue to actively participate in the consultations and

events related to the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the elaboration of SDGs.

24. The UNCCD secretariat should continue providing high quality services to the Parliamentary Round Tables with a view to promote and make visible our activities; and we further invite the secretariat to facilitate the organization of the eleventh Round Table of Parliamentarians in conjunction with the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.
25. The President of the Steering Committee in collaboration with the Steering Committee members is invited to take appropriate follow-up actions on the outcome of the present Round Table and report to the Round Table at its next session.